

Message Text

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10/63

ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WAEHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3702

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3537

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR MRN 3537 VICE 3337)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, ET

SUBJECT: TENNECO SIX

FREEMAN GAVE EMBASSY ADVANCE COPY OF PRESS RELEASE HE PLANS
HAVE ISSUED FROM HOUSTON 8 JUNE. THERE MAY BE MINOR CHANGES IN
FINAL COPY. FREEMAN AND PARTY PLAN DEPART ATHENS MORNING 9 JUNE
FOR HUSTON.

PRESS RELEASE IS AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE

N.W. FREEMAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TENNECO INC. OF HOUSTON,
TEXAS, ANNOUNCED TODAY FROM ATHENS, GREECE, THAT ALL NEGOTIATIONS
HAVE BEEN TERMINATED FOR THE RELEASE OF FIVE TENNECO PRISONERS, AND
ONE AMERICAN MISSIONARY NURSE, HELD BY THE ERITREAN LIBERATION
FRONT IN ETHIOPIA. THE FIVE TENNECO CAPTIVES WERE KIDNAPPED BY THE
ELF MARCH 26, 1974, MORE THAN 10 WEEKS AGO. THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY
NURSE WAS KIDNAPPED MAY 27, 1974, AT WHICH TIME A DUTCH MISSIONARY
NURSE WAS ALSO KIDNAPPED AND MURDERED.

FREEMAN STATED TENNECO HAS ALWAYS TAKEN CARE OF ITS PEOPLE. WE
GREW FROM A SMALL FAMILY TO A BIG FAMILY BUT ALWAYS ONE FAMILY.
AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD I FELT DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE UNFAIR
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IMPRISONMENT OF OUR PEOPLE BY THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT.

FREEMAN FUTHER ADVISED THAT HE CAME TO ATHENS, GREECE ONE WEEK AGO TODAY AND SENT NEGOTIATORS TO VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELF.

NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN MOST CONFUSING DUE TO THE APPARENT MAKE-UP OF THE ELF COMMAND COUNCIL CONSISTING OF 16 TO 24 MEMBERS. THE COUNCIL DOES NOT SEEM TO BE UNITED AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR INABILITY TO COME TO ANY AGREEMENT AMONG THEMSELVES.

DURING THE PAST WEEK WE HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH A MEMBER OF THE COMMAND COUNCIL WHO APPEARED TO HAVE GOOD CREDENTIALS BUT NO AUTHORITY. HE FAILED TO KEEP AN APPOINTMENT WITH OUR NEGOTIATORS WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH PAST ACTIONS OF THE ELF SINCE THE KIDNAPPINGS OCCURRED. THEIR ACTIONS ALSO INDICATE THEY APPARENTLY HAVE NO REAL DESIRE TO RELEASE THE CAPTIVES EXCEPT UNDER IMPOSSIBLE TERMS AND CONDITIONS BEYOND THE CONTROL OF TENNECO.

FREEMAN EMPHATICALLY SAID THAT THE ONLY WAY NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE REOPENED WILL BE FOR THE ELF TO RELEASE 2 CAPTIVES ACCOMPANIED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ELF WITH FULL AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE RELEASE OF THE REMAINING 3 AND ALSO THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY NURSE.

FREEMAN ADVISED THAT THESE 2 HOSTAGES CAN BE RELEASED AT ANY AMERICAN EMBASSY OR CONSULAR POST IN AFRICA WHERE THEIR MEDICAL NEEDS AND NOTIFICATION TO TENNECO CAN BE TAKEN CARE OF IMMEDIATELY.

FREEMAN FURTHER SAID THE DUE TO THE TOTAL CONFUSION RESULTING FROM THE KIDNAPPINGS AND THE MURDER OF THE DUTCH NURSE, THAT IT IS NOW NECESSARY FOR TENNECO TO REEVALUATE THE ENTIRE SITUATION AND GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO TENNECO'S FUTURE IN ETHIOPIA.
UNQUOTE

ATHENS SIGNAL CENTER NOTE: APPROPRIATE MCN'S TO FOLLOW
10 JUNE 1974 BY SERVICE WIRE.
TASCA

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